

The **United Reformed Church**
National Synod of Wales

Yr **Eglwys Ddiwygiedig Unedig**
Synod Cenedlaethol Cymru

Cyfarfod Synod y Gwanwyn
Spring Synod Meeting

Saturday 15th March 2025

**The United Church in Rhyl,
Water St, Rhyl LL18 1SP**

or

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85765036779?pwd=rdCq1mryDKhUDIAOU7kRLA7Rabu2S7.1>

ID: 857 6503 6779

Passcode: Synod12

Yr Eglwys Ddiwygiedig Unedig Synod Cenedlaethol Cymru
The United Reformed Church National Synod of Wales

Synod Office | Minster Road | Roath | Cardiff | CF23 5AS
Ffôn | Tel.: 029 2019 5728

www.urcwales.org.uk

Contents

Section 1:	Notices	page 5
Section 2:	Agenda	page 7
Section 3:	Synod Support Team	page 8
Section 4:	Synod Pastoral Committee	page 13
Section 5:	Mission and Discipleship Board	page 15
Section 6:	Finance and Property Board/Trust Company	page 17
Section 7:	Church Life Review	page 19
Appendix A:	Nominations Report	page 24
Appendix B:	Ecumenical Officer’s Briefing Paper	page 30
Appendix C:	The Reception of the Churches discussion paper	page 36
Appendix D:	Standing Orders	page 40

Resolutions

Resolution 1: Pattern of Future Synod Meetings

Synod Meeting resolves to have two hybrid Synod Meetings each year from 1st January 2026, and welcomes exploration of other models of meeting.

Resolution 2: Church Life Fund

Synod Meeting welcomes the creation by General Assembly of a Church Life Review Fund and strongly encourages Finance and Property Board in conjunction with the United Reformed Church (Wales) Trust Company Limited to contribute at an appropriate level consummate with the unrestricted resources available to the Trust.

1. Notices

1.1 Venue

The meeting will take at the United Church in Rhyl and on Zoom. If attending in person, look out for the URC logo signs.

1.2 Food and Drink

A complimentary lunch will be provided for those attending in person. If you have any special dietary requirements (other than vegetarian), please let Joel Sainsbury (joel.sainsbury.urcwailes@urc.org.uk) know before Monday 10th March. In addition, tea and coffee will be available on arrival.

1.3 Directions:

By rail:

We encourage you to travel via public transport where possible.

Rhyl railway station is approximately 5 minutes on foot (0.2 miles) from The United Church in Rhyl.

By road:

The United Church is in the centre of Rhyl. The church's post code is LL18 1SP. Click here to find it on Google Maps: maps.app.goo.gl/vmimYt7KEPfDDr556

1.4 Car Parking

Rhyl Town Hall car park is across the road from the United Church. [Click here](#) for more information.

1.5 Visitors

Everyone is welcome to attend and participate in the Synod Meeting, although only members of Synod will be able to vote. All speakers are asked to identify themselves by name and local church.

1.6 On Arrival

- a) For Synod representatives: Please collect a label, to act as your name badge, and an expenses claim form. You may claim the cost of public transport, or car travel at variable rates depending on the number of people in the car. Please complete your expenses form with your bank details and leave it in the box before you leave: payment will be made electronically soon afterwards. If you would like the Synod to claim Gift Aid on all or part of your expenses claim, please complete the relevant section of the form. Please exchange your completed attendance card for three voting cards, which should be returned at the end of the meeting.

If you require a printed copy of the meeting papers, please contact Megan Price at megan.price.urcwailes@urc.org.uk by Tuesday 11 March. Printed copies will only be available for those who have requested one.

b) For visitors: Please collect a label, to act as your name badge.

1.7 **Quiet Space**

A Quiet Space will be available for anyone who feels overwhelmed or needs a moment of quiet during the day. This will be signposted at the venue or speak to a member of the Synod Support Team to find out more.

1.8 **Synod eNewsletter**

If you are not already subscribed to the synod's monthly eNewsletter – with news of people and places, information and requests, events, resources, etc. – you may do so by following this link: bit.ly/2MGqveS.

1.9 **Forthcoming Synod Meetings are as follows:**

Saturday 18th October 2025 a hybrid meeting at The Priory Centre, Abergavenny and on Zoom

Saturday 21st March 2026 a hybrid meeting at a local church and on Zoom

2. Agenda

It would be helpful to those involved if any questions on the reports that are not the subject of resolutions could be supplied in advance to the Synod Clerk (megan.price.urc.wales@urc.org.uk).

9.30 **Gathering and Refreshments**

10.00 **Opening Worship**

Commemorations and Ministerial Anniversaries
 Introductions and Notices

Minutes of October 2024 Synod Meeting [[click here to download](#)]
 Matters Arising from the Minutes

Pattern of Future Synod Meetings [[Resolution 1](#)]

Church Life Review [[Resolution 2](#)]

Mission in practice: North Wales Worship Hub

Ecumenism in Wales
 Introducing The Reception of the Churches discussion paper

Leading Your Church Into Growth – an introduction

Safeguarding – GP6 Wales launch

Reports to Synod
 Closing Worship

12.30 **Finish**

Those attending in person are encouraged to stay for lunch which will be followed by an interactive workshop hosted by Revd Dr Jason Askew, the synod's Training and Development Officer. The afternoon will finish at 3pm.

3. Synod Support Team

FOR DECISION:

3.1 Pattern of future Synod Meetings

In 2021, in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, Synod Meeting passed a resolution stating that we would hold one meeting in person and one online each year, with a review after 3 years. In the meantime, our “in person” meetings have become hybrid, enabling much wider access, and we are now trialling a hybrid version of our spring meeting.

Going forward, we propose to hold all meeting as hybrid, where possible, with the spring meeting moving around the synod and the autumn meeting in a regular central location. Looking to the future, we are also exploring the possibility of holding a residential meeting, recognising that there will be much to discuss following this year’s extraordinary meeting of General Assembly and the conclusion of the Church Life Review.

We welcome any and all feedback on Synod Meeting arrangements and encourage anyone with suggestions or comments to contact the Synod Clerk at megan.price.urcwailes@urc.org.uk.

[[Resolution 1](#)]

3.2 Resolutions from General Assembly

Two **constitutional resolutions** have been referred to Synods for consideration:

Paper H6, Resolution 26

General Assembly adopts the changes to Schedule A of The Manual with regards to Ministry in the United Reformed Church (paragraphs 19-24).

See paper for details.

[Link to paper H6.](#)

Paper H8, Resolution 28

General Assembly amends the Basis of Union paragraph 24 to read (new words in blue):

24. All other ministries recognised by the uniting churches at the date of unification (as defined by the United Reformed Church Act 1981) shall continue to be exercised in the United Reformed Church without further commissioning, subject always to the decisions of the General Assembly. The URC shall determine from time to time what other ministries may be required and which of them should be recognised as ministries in the whole Church. It shall decide how those who are to exercise them shall be set apart. [The affirmations in Schedule B \(adapted for the particular ministry\) shall be made by those entering](#)

upon all such ministries within the life of the Church.

[Link to paper H8.](#)

Whilst it is not a requirement to discuss these, the links to the relevant General Assembly papers are included. If anyone has any reasons to object, then please email the Synod Clerk, megan.price.urcwales@urc.org.uk by the 13th March.

If as a Synod, it is felt that we have any objections to this resolution we will need to pass a resolution that it 'be not proceeded with'.

FOR NOTING:

3.3 General Assembly 2025

The following will represent the National Synod of Wales at General Assembly 2025 (Fri 4 – Mon 7 July and Fri 14 – Sun 16 November 2025):

Minister/CRCW

Jason Askew

Susan Durber

Julie Kirby

Lee Liddell

Martha McInnes

Johnny O'Hanlon

David Salsbury

Kate Wolsey

Elder/Lay Person

Chris Atherton

Sheila Kavanagh

Maggie Kirkbride

Wendy Marston-Phipps

Megan Price

Bethan Trott

Jayden Williams †

1 x under 26 TBC

† <26

3.4 Moderator of General Assembly 2026-2027

No nominations were received by the deadline of Wednesday 6 January 2025.

FOR INFORMATION:

3.5 Synod Membership

The Synod may co-opt up to twenty-four additional members, being people with a particular role or responsibility within the Synod. Those who are at present co-opted members of Synod for the duration of their respective appointments are as follows:

- Ian Lloyd-Parry (Convener of FPB)
- Megan Price (Synod Clerk)
- Judy Harris (CYDO)

- Maggie Kirkbride (Synod Lay Preaching Advocate)
- Revd Gethin Rhys (Cytûn National Assembly Policy Officer)
- Hunyoung Park, Philip Rickards, Carolyn Ridding, Pete Fawcett, Jill Shelton, and Verena Walder (Local Church Leaders)

3.6 **Nominations**

The up to date (at the time of the compilation of these papers) report of Nominations is included at [Appendix A](#).

3.7 **General Assembly 2024 Resolutions which have implications for local churches**

General Assembly met from Friday 12th to Monday 15th July at the Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire.

The following resolutions which were passed have implications for local churches (and some for Synod) and should be considered at Elders Meetings.

For more information on any of these, you can find the full General Assembly papers on the URC website at: www.urch.org.uk/general-assembly-executive-assembly-committees/general-assembly-general-assembly-papers

Paper A9, Resolutions 6 and 9 – **Conflicts of Interest Policy**

Resolution 6: General Assembly adopts the [Conflicts of Interests Statement](#).

Resolution 9: General Assembly encourages Local Churches, Synods, Synod Trust companies and the URC Trust to review, amend or adopt where necessary their own conflicts of interest policy.

Paper H4, Resolution 21 – **Changes to Plan for Partnership**

General Assembly agrees to a change of wording in 6.3.2 from spouse and children to spouse/partner and dependent children in 6.3.2.

Paper H4, Resolution 22 – **Increase in the Fixed Car Allowance**

General Assembly changes the rate of the Fixed Car Allowance from £1,200 to £2,400 and the Fixed Motorcycle Allowance from £300 to £600 in the Plan for Partnership from 1st January 2025.

Paper H4, Resolution 24 – **Clarification of Ministerial Holiday Entitlement**

General Assembly agrees the changes to holiday entitlement in paragraph 8 of the Plan for Partnership to include when to carry over holiday to the following year for sick leave, parental leave or Jury Service; expectations for sabbatical and holiday leave; Bank Holidays and days in lieu for Christmas Day and Good Friday.

Paper H5, Resolution 25 – **Revised Local Mission and Ministry Review**

General Assembly adopts the revised [Local Mission and Ministry Review \(LMMR\)](#) and commends it for use in local churches/pastorates.

Paper H7, Resolution 27 – Guidelines on Elders in Local Leadership

General Assembly adopts the [guidelines on Elders in Local Leadership](#) and commends the document for use in Synods.

Paper H9, Resolution 29 – Additions to Policy on Withdrawal of Call

General Assembly agrees the additions to the URC Policy on [Withdrawal of Call](#).

Paper H11, Resolution 35 – Guidelines for those who lead worship in our Churches

General Assembly adopts the [Guidelines for those who Lead Worship in our Churches](#).

Paper I2, Resolution 36 – Request to report process towards net zero carbon emissions

General Assembly requests that Local Churches, Synods and related Trust companies should report by 31 March each year on an assessment of progress made during the previous calendar year in reducing carbon emissions across the Synod, including Synod Offices, manses and church buildings held in trust by Synod Trust companies and Synod activities and that this report be shared with the Net Zero Task Group so that overall progress across all the Synods can be recorded and reported to General Assembly annually by the Mission Committee.

NB: The synod has now received the template for this report and will be leading on collating the information requested.

Paper I3, Resolution 43 – Encouragement for interfaith dialogue in light of Middle East conflicts

Given the unacceptable rise in religious hate crime, General Assembly encourages every local church and Synod to reach out in friendship and welcome to their local faith communities using interfaith dialogue and/or other resources available to them for this purpose.

Paper X2, Resolution 52-53 – A Church with People at the Margins: A Strategy for Mission and Ministry

Resolution 52: In response to General Assembly 2023 Resolution 31 (c), General Assembly commends the North Western Synod's strategy document '[A Church with People at the Margins: A Strategy for Mission and Ministry](#)' to the wider church. General Assembly encourages all parts of the United Reformed Church to reflect on its implications for their own areas of responsibility.

Resolution 53: General Assembly requests that Synods, Assembly Committees and Task Groups consider the implications of the North Western Synod report, 'A Church with people at the margins', particularly in respect of the priority given to the allocation of resources (people, finance and other) for ministry and mission to churches working with those experiencing poverty and marginalisation, and asks the Church Life Steering Group to review the feasibility of establishing a Community Enabling Fund that any church within the United Reformed Church can apply to, in order to support and develop their presence and engagement with people experiencing poverty and marginalisation, and report to the extraordinary General Assembly in November 2025.

Resolution 1: Pattern of Future Synod Meetings

Synod Meeting resolves to have two hybrid Synod Meetings each year from 1st January 2026, and welcomes exploration of other models of meeting.

4. Synod Pastoral Committee

FOR NOTING:

4.1 **The Reception of the Churches: The Commission of Covenanted Churches discussion paper**

This year marks the 50th anniversary of The Commission of Covenanted Churches, formed in 1975 by The Covenanted Baptist churches, the Presbyterian Church of Wales, the United Reformed Church, the Methodist Church and the Church in Wales 'to seek visible unity' together, including working toward the establishment of a Uniting Church of Wales.

As a move towards making this possible, they have produced a paper for discussion entitled The Reception of the Churches, which can be found in [Appendix B](#). Synod Pastoral Committee have referred this document to local churches for consideration ahead of a discussion and decision to be made at Autumn Synod Meeting as to whether the synod should proceed further with these discussions.

FOR INFORMATION:

4.2 **Ministerial changes**

Revd David Jones (PCW) was Inducted to the Alun Vale pastorate on Saturday 26 October 2024.

4.3 **Ministerial reviews**

Revd Brian Matthews: a glowing review of Brian's role at Salisbury Park, Wrexham, was warmly received along with Brian's willingness to continue serving the church. Ministries have agreed an extension to Brian's Certificate of Limited Service to enable this.

Revd John Hayton: a review of John's NSM role in the South Pembrokeshire pastorate demonstrated the value that the churches place on his thoughtful support and ministry. John's post has been renewed, with a review period of three years (a change from the current two years, to bring his terms in line with other similar roles in the synod).

Revd Lee Liddell: a review of the first two years of Lee's three year role at Pontprennau Community Church highlighted the important work she is doing in enabling the church and fostering community links as well as the deep connections she has forged within the congregation. In recognition of the

progress made and the work still to do, Lee's Transitional Ministry role has been renewed for a second term of three years, ending in August 2028.

Revd Martin Spain: a review of Martin's current role is in progress.

4.4 **Church closure**

Bethesda, Tongwynlais, closed on 31st January 2025.

4.5 **Church changes**

Penuel URC, Llanwrthwl, are in the process of forming an LEP with the local Church in Wales congregation.

4.6 **Vacancies**

A vacancy remains in the Valleys Pastorate, comprising Hope and Market Square, Van Road, St David's Uniting Church and Bethany, Ystrad Mynach alongside some regional duties. An introduction is in progress.

4.7 **Ecumenical Matters**

A Briefing Paper from the Ecumenical and Interfaith Officer can be found at [Appendix B](#).

5. Mission and Discipleship Board

Mission and Discipleship Board continues to meet 4 times a year both in person and on Zoom.

FOR NOTING:

5.1 **Mission Enabler**

The synod continues to look for a new Mission Enabler. The role is to help churches and individuals engage and respond to and bring the love and hope of the Good News of Jesus Christ within their church and in particular their wider communities. The main function is to enable others to be missional - to guide, inspire, equip, and facilitate people to confidently carry the Gospel into our everyday lives.

For more information, please contact either Julia Bartholomew or the Synod Office.

FOR INFORMATION:

5.2 **Eco Roadshows**

Eco Roadshows continue into 2025. Events have already taken place at Rivertown URC, Shotton; Albany Church, Haverfordwest and City URC, Cardiff. The next roadshow is planned for **Christ Well, Swansea on Saturday 29th March** and **Brecon Beacons Pastorate at Abergavenny on Saturday 10th May**. If they've not reached your region yet, watch this space.

5.3 **A More Able Church**

A More Able Church webinars are continuing to help local churches be more welcoming and accessible to people with disabilities, both seen and unseen. Last year hearing loss and sight loss were explored and more recently insights into neurodiversity were highlighted. The next webinars will be on **Tuesday 25th March led by Through the Roof**, on **Wednesday 14th May on the topic of Living with Chronic Pain** then on **Tuesday 15th July will be Living with Dementia**.

There is also work going on to develop a relationship with 'Through the Roof', a Christian disability charity.

5.4 **Children, Young People and Families Work**

A Godly Play course is due to be held in Trefeca College in October, but places are limited.

There is concern over the change in date for Youth Assembly which will potentially clash with mock exams for both GCSE and A Levels.

It is worth remembering that our young people are a great resource for our churches, and we need to ensure their voices are heard.

5.3 **Rural Matters**

Within rural communities, the big issue continues to be the implications of changes around inheritance tax. Not to mention things like affordable housing and access to public transport.

5.4 **Synod Stepwise**

The latest Faith Filled Life stream has finished so please look out for future streams including Faith Filled Life, Faith Filled Worship, and the new stream Faith Filled Environment.

There are also conversations taking place with neighbouring synods about doing on-line Stepwise courses across synods.

5.5 **Mission Committee**

Mission Committee last met in October when topics included the ongoing situation in Gaza and updates on the journey towards Net Zero and how synods will report their progress. There was also a presentation on Open Table, and the training proposals for church members on LGBTQIA+ issues.

The Committee is due to meet again in March, just before Synod Meeting.

6. Finance and Property Board/Trust Company

FOR NOTING:

6.1 **Property Sale**

The sale of 39 Parc Gwelfor, Dyserth, was completed in October.

6.2 **Mission & Development Fund development grants**

Development grants from the Mission & Development Fund were made in November to Llanfair Uniting Church, Penrhys, and Canton URC, Cardiff, for building refurbishment and development.

6.3 **Synod Manse Fund**

Grants from the Synod Manse Fund were made in November to Tiers Cross URC and in January to the United Church in Rhyl, towards manse remedial works.

6.4 **Church Heating**

In November, it was agreed that the synod would fund feasibility studies for churches considering replacing their heating systems.

6.5 **Mission & Development Fund main grants**

A main grant and a repayable grant from the Mission & Development Fund were made in November to Rivertown URC, Shotton, towards the church's building redevelopment project.

6.6 **Property Sale**

The sale of 4 Woodville Road, Newport, was completed in December.

6.7 **Daphne & Bethan Fund**

In January, grants from the Daphne & Bethan Fund were agreed for Barry Uniting Church and Rivertown URC, Shotton.

FOR INFORMATION:

- 6.8 In January, a resolution for closure from Bethesda URC, Tongwynlais, was received.

- 6.9 In January, the transfer of the former St David's Uniting Church building at Gelliwastad Road, Pontypridd, to the Presbyterian Church of Wales was approved.
- 6.10 In January, a resolution requesting that the URC (Wales) Trust become the sole trustee of Penuel URC, Llanwrthwl, was received and agreed.

7. Church Life Review

The following pages contain an update on the progress of the Church Life Review which was included in Reform last autumn.

Myles Dunnett will be present at Synod Meeting to give a further update and answer questions.

Resolution 2: Church Life Fund

Synod Meeting welcomes the creation by General Assembly of a Church Life Review Fund and strongly encourages Finance and Property Board in conjunction with the United Reformed Church (Wales) Trust Company Limited to contribute at an appropriate level consummate with the unrestricted resources available to the Trust.

THE STORY SO FAR

As the URC embarks on the second phase of its Church Life Review, **John Bradbury**, the General Secretary recaps. Newcomers start here...

The story of the Church Life Review begins with our decision to accept, name and understand the hard reality that faces us, and find ways to respond. This takes a long time, in a Church whose life flows through many interconnecting councils.

The challenges when I first became General Secretary were pretty clear. There are fewer and fewer people to take on the responsibilities of local church life. There is frustration in churches that want to do things, but haven't got the human resources. Elders and ministers are stretched thinly and a lot of their time is taken up with things that don't feel like the reason we want to be church. The consequence is decline in many, but not all, congregations. Churches are closing at a rate of knots. In places where we've had a witness for hundreds of years, that witness isn't there any more. It's disheartening.

Then there's the work that enables the national Church to function: the training of ministers, finance, communication; we have a kind of HR department for ministers; the Joint Public Issues Team gives us a witness in the public square that no local church could have on its own; our world Church work, and our anti-racist work, would be very hard to do as individual churches. All of that is funded from the Ministry and Mission budget that local churches contribute to – the fund that pays for our ministers as well as all this work. With fewer churches and fewer members contributing, that budget gets squeezed, which means fewer ministers, and less of the work that we want to do together.

Also our Church consists of 13



'We have been selling the family silver'

synods, which have grown enormously to become one of the main ways we support local churches practically. An unintended consequence of that is that we've tended to reinvent the wheel 13 times and there's quite a lot of duplicated effort.

So some things were clear from the start: we need to find ways to offer more support to local churches; we need more efficient structures; we need to reduce some of our outgoings; we need to invest resources in areas of work that thrive and grow.

Phase One of the Church Life Review included an investigation into what exactly the situation in the United Reformed Church is.

Firstly, we engaged the thinktank Theos to explore the life of the URC, what our vocation is. A picture emerged of a Church with a passion for transformative work in local communities, where our churches are often very small but have a disproportionate impact, but where people are tired. The report challenged us to think about our evangelism and how we connect the work we do with being a disciple of Jesus.

Secondly, we undertook forensic

accounting, to give us for the first time a picture of where our money is and what we spend it on. This indicates areas where we might gain from fuller cooperation. It also shows that the overall wealth of the URC is always increasing. That's a very complicated picture, with lots of caveats, but you do see that as we sell church buildings, financial reserves in synods rise, to levels that people might find quite startling.

Synods have almost no income except from investments and the sale of churches. That is a major source of income for the work of URC. So we are, as it were, selling the family silver.

And yet, we are not spending down the silver as fast as it's coming in, and even allowing for inflation, it would appear we are potentially accruing assets. This suggests that, instead of trying to maintain the level of our assets, we might spend them to invest in the life of the Church. There will be many more church closures, unfortunately, but if we can invest some of that money in new ways of working together, in support for congregations, in developing new congregations, then perhaps our resources can begin to meet our needs.

Thirdly, we tried to streamline our central operations. We merged a lot of committees into one Resources Committee. There are continued conversations about how that works in the discipleship department. We're aiming for a committee structure that gives us what we need using fewer people. The more siloed it becomes, the less effective it is, but when committees have a broad view of the needs of the Church, we're able to respond more effectively.

Thanks to stage one of the Church Life Review, for the first time we've got some clear accounts of all of this that enable us to begin to work from a common place. That enabled us at the General Assembly in 2023, with a remarkable degree of unanimity, to set off the key bits of work for stage two, which is trying to work out how we unravel this and put it back together in new ways.●

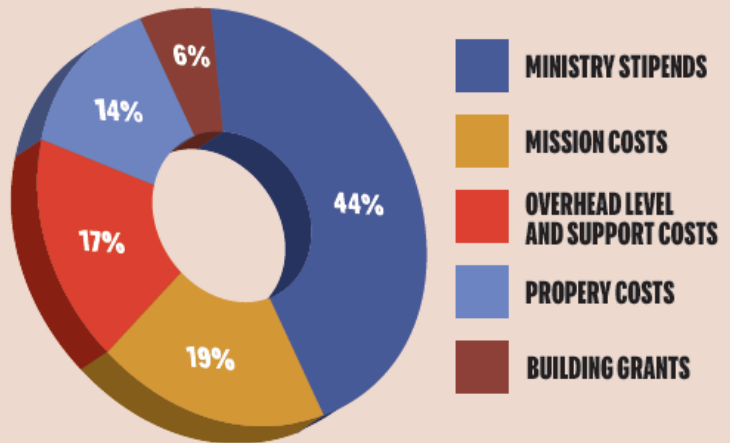
John Bradbury is General Secretary of the URC. He was talking to Stephen Tomkins urc.org.uk/ctr

THE URC IN NUMBERS

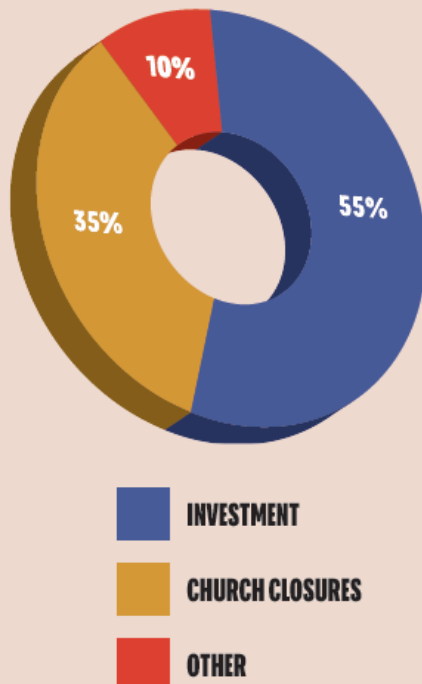
**£1.221
Million**
**THE URC TRUST
DEFICIT IN 2023**

STAFF EMPLOYED (FTE)	SYNODS	GENERAL ASSEMBLY
MISSION STAFF	70	21
SUPPORT STAFF	80	80

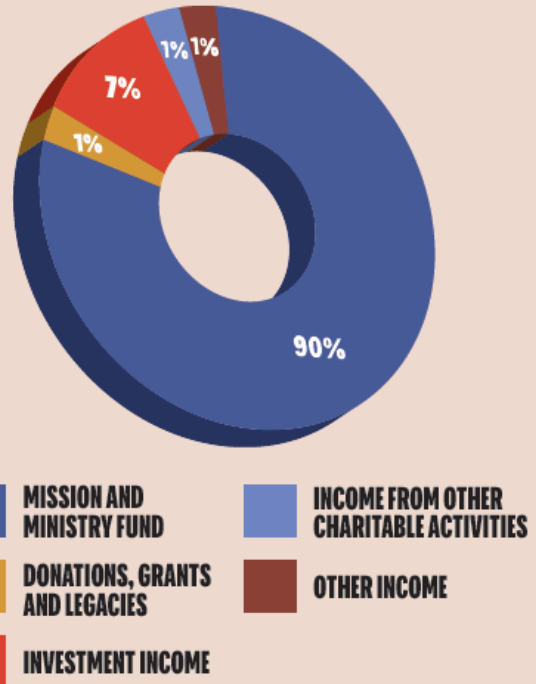
GA AND SYNOD EXPENDITURE 2021* (*Source: MKS report)



SOURCES OF SYNODS' INCOME*



URC TRUST INCOME 2023



WHO'S WHO in the Church Life Review?

Meet the Steering Group

JAN ADAMSON



A retired minister, and before that a manager in hospitality and leisure. Served as Field Officer for Local Mission and Development in Scotland, then after retirement in synod consultancy, on the Board of Westminster College, Synod Clerk to Scotland and Interim Moderator for Bathgate URC. She is a member at Bathgate, a small, elderly but energetic congregation which draws around 30 on a Sunday and supports the local food bank. 'I hope I can play my small part, exploring the mind of Christ for the URC. I am proud to say I saw the URC formed in 1972, so I have an interest in helping it travel onwards.'

ELIZABETH HALL



Works as a therapist. Served as an elder at Chorlton Central Church, leading worship and coordinating safeguarding. Convenor of a Missional Partnership and of the Ministries and Learning Committee for North Western Synod.

Her church is a Baptist-URC LEP in South Manchester, where services are informal and welcoming. A growing involvement in wider Church life through General Assembly led to her joining the Steering group.

'My hope is this review enables us to move with determination and joy into the next part of our denominational life together.'

LYTHAN NEVARD



Moderator of Eastern Synod. Previously a pioneer minister in a new town near Exeter.

Part of FURY in the 1980s, then a minister in four different synods.

A member of Sawston Free Church, Cambridgeshire, an outward-looking church following an invitational model and partnering with Hope into Action.

'I hope the URC continues to enable local churches to flourish, in order to reveal God's love through relationship. There are opportunities, if we are brave enough to step out of the boat and walk towards Jesus. I am passionate about resourcing synods and churches equitably for mission and discipleship.'

MUNA LEVAN-HARRIS



Muna grew up in West Africa, Germany and England. After graduating from

university, Muna studied at the College of Law before training as a solicitor and specialising in property litigation.

Muna became a member of the URC in 2006 and was appointed as the Legal and Trust Officer for URC Thames North Trust in 2017. Muna is a governor of Churches' Legislation Advisory Service, the convenor of PLATO (Property, Legal and Trust Officers), and represents it at the Law and Polity Advisory Group. Muna has a deep interest in theology and anthropology, and having gained a Graduate Diploma in theology, ministry and mission, will undertake an MPhil in World Christianities.

STEVE FABER



Moderator of the West Midlands Synod. Ordained in 1998, serving in Enfield and Lincolnshire. He was in the Church Life Review Group, first phase.

Steve is a member of Solihull URC. Despite challenging demographics, it is responding to local needs, aiming to serve 'the least, the last, the lost and the lonely.' In many ways, Solihull is a very typical URC congregation.

'I'm genuinely excited to see where God is taking us. I hope we will see a denomination more fit for purpose, better structured, making people and money available in the right ways and right places – locally, and missionally – and really making a difference, for Christ's sake.'

TIM HOPLEY



Clerk for North Western Synod. Previously a criminal defence lawyer, his father and grandfather were ministers in the

Congregational and then United Reformed Church. Tim has been in the URC since its formation in 1972. An Elder at Greenmount URC for over 30 years and a lay preacher. Greenmount is an inclusive, welcoming and thriving church in a Manchester commuter village, with a congregation of 40-50, and a focus on being part of the community. 'Change is needed. I hope the CLR will enable us to look at ourselves critically, and streamline the essential, and grow our service to the community, and the commitment to sharing God's love.'

ROMILLY MICKLEM



Spent 16 years in programme management in the IT and finance industries, then served in pastoral ministry, URC, LEP and Methodist, for 13 years. Member of a tiny congregation in rural Buckinghamshire.

He joined the Wessex Synod's Finance and Property committee in 2012, became a trustee of the synod's trust company in 2016 and convenor of the Board in 2018. He serves full-time in synod-directed ministry, supporting the work of the Trust and synod.

'Over 45 years, I have experienced the URC at local, regional and national level – seeing both what we do well and where we need to do better. The Church Life Review offers us an opportunity to shape our denomination to support our future.'

Jack Charlesworth is also a member of the Steering Group. Thanks to all for their time and insight.

NEXT STEPS

Myles Dunnett outlines phase two of the Church Life Review

The URC General Assembly established phase two (Design) of the Church Life Review in 2023. In March 2024, I was delighted to become Programme Manager for the Church Life Review. Since then, we have made good progress on establishing the process; the entire programme has moved forward.

The primary objectives of phase two are to investigate new ways of working, to analyse the outcome of those investigations, and to deliver recommendations to an extraordinary session of General Assembly in November 2025. The emphasis is on consultation and exploration, which gives scope for creative responses to emerging change.

The 2023 General Assembly set out our work, establishing the Church Life Review's three workstreams: financial resource sharing, employment of lay workers, and provision of support services. The original intention was to establish three task groups, but this was not possible, so the Business Committee approved a revised approach in April.

We now have a Steering Group responsible for guiding the review, overseen by a Sub-Committee of the Business Committee. The Steering Group supports events and consultations and prepares reports and recommendations for Assembly. It will be supported by a wider informal consultative network.

The Steering Group members are Steve Faber, Lythan Nevard, Romilly Micklem, Muna Levan-Harris, Elizabeth Hall, Tim Hopley, Jack Charlesworth, and Jan Adamson (see p.40). The Sub-Committee members are John Bradbury, Victoria James, Alan Yates, Sarah Moore, and Darnette Whitby-Reid. I am grateful to all these



'We hope living labs will be a way to see where God is moving'

individuals for their willingness to contribute their gifts, graces and time.

After work from within the Church, some technical questions of financial resource sharing may be explored by consultants. Because the URC is a highly specific and nuanced context, we will ensure that any consultants are fully briefed.

We plan to set up 'living labs', designed and run with synods, as on-the-ground trials of new ways of working, giving us rapid feedback on how innovative models work for local churches and synods. We hope they will be a way to see where God is moving.

As part of the shared support services workstream the Administration and Resources team is working to provide a compliance resource portal for local churches.

To date, we have made most progress on the financial resource sharing question. On 13 June, we held a finance consultation at the Royal National Hotel, London. It was a helpful and pragmatic day, and we are developing proposals for the Steering Group to take this forward.

Following smaller consultations, we are starting to get a sense of where and how we can deliver living labs. Further updates will be communicated in due course.

Over the next few months, we will establish and manage a portfolio of work. We will begin analysing the outcomes in spring 2025 and bring recommendations to Assembly in November. Key tasks before the end of the year will include meetings of the Steering Group and Sub-Committee, further work on the financial resource sharing options, and the establishment of the first living labs. In November 2024, we will hold a larger consultation about providing shared support services, responding to Resolutions 49 and 50 from General Assembly 2023.

The review deals with complex interrelated questions, some of which go back to the passing of the original URC Act in 1972. In this complexity, we are committed to transparency and inclusiveness. This is a collaborative effort, reaching across the Church family to take in a wide spectrum of views and opinions. Consultative events are an integral part of the review, as are regular updates on progress. There are many ways to contribute to the programme, and I encourage anyone who would like to arrange a conversation with me to do so. My contact details are below.

I appreciate that the Church Life Review involves a lot of technical, managerial language, which can sometimes seem at odds with how we think about Church. The point is not to get lost in the mire of methodology, but to put it at the service of making space for new possibilities in God's Church. My hope is that by following this review process through, we will be able to unburden local churches, equipping the URC to flourish in a changing world.●

Myles Dunnett is Programme Manager of the Church Life Review. He has worked for the Church of England, including for the Clewer Initiative, which tackles modern slavery. Email myles.dunnett@urc.org.uk to arrange a phone or video call, or churchlifereview@urc.org.uk for general enquiries

Appendix A: Nominations Report

Synod Support Team

Synod Moderator

David Salsbury From 1 April 2024

Synod Clerk

Megan Price 2022 –

Trust Company Secretary and Synod Treasurer

Chris Atherton 2006 –

Training and Development Officer

Jason Askew 2020 –

Children and Youth Development Officer (CYDO)

Judy Harris 2014 –

Safeguarding Officer

Diana Taylor 2021 –

Deputy Safeguarding Officer

Judy Harris

Officer for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations

Martin Spain 2021 –

Moderator's PA, Office Manager and Cashier

Joel Sainsbury

Property Officer and Assistant Company Secretary

Claire Boot

Finance Administrator

Joanna Harris

Administration Officer

Maggie Kirkbride

Synod Boards and Committees

The Synod Moderator and Synod Clerk are ex-officio members of all Boards and Committees

Synod Pastoral Committee

Representatives of Regional Pastoral Committees:

North Wales	Paul Robinson
East Wales	Branwen Rees
Cardiff and Penarth	Martha McInnes
Valleys and Vale	<i>vacant</i>
Swansea	Verena Walder
Pembrokeshire	Stella Hayton
Mid Wales	<i>vacant</i>
Bridgend United Area	Richard Gillon
Brecon Beacons	Julie Kirby

Northern College (co-opted) Graham Adams

Ex officio

Training and Development Officer

Officer for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations

Lay Preaching Advocate

In attendance: representative of the Youth and Children Working Group, Synod representative to the Commission of Covenanted Churches Faith and Order Group

Finance and Property Board

Convener	Ian Lloyd-Parry	2008 – 2026
Secretary	Property Officer	
Members:	Sheila Jones	2018 – 2027
	Alison Tansom	2021 – 2027
	<i>1 vacancy</i>	

Ex officio

Trust Company Secretary and Synod Treasurer

Office Manager and Cashier

Property Officer

Mission and Discipleship Board

Convener	Branwen Rees	2021 – 2026
Members:	Julia Bartholomew	2021 – 2026
	Judith Dolben	2018 – 2026
	Martin Spain	2021 – 2026

Ex officio

Training and Development Officer
 Children and Youth Development Officer
 Representative to URC Mission Committee
 Green Advocate
 Rural Advocate
 Lay Preaching Advocate

Synod Office Management Group

Synod Clerk (Convener)
 Office Manager (Secretary)
 Trust Company Secretary and Synod Treasurer

Wales District Council

Officer for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations (Convener)
 Synod Clerk (Secretary)
 Synod Moderator
 Synod Treasurer
 Together with others drawn together relevant to the location of the church being considered.

Safeguarding Reference Group

Safeguarding Officer (Convener)
 Deputy Safeguarding Officer
 Trust Secretary
 Pat Davies
 Lyn Evans
 Liz Jones
 Bethan Trott

Other Appointments

To General Assembly Councils/Committees/Panels, etc.

Mission Committee	Branwen Rees	2018 – 2026
Assembly Commission for Discipline Panel	Martha McInnes	
Disciplinary Investigation Panel	Martin Spain	
Interfaith enabling group	Officer for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations	
Safeguarding Committee	Safeguarding Officer	

To other URC networks, etc.

Green Advocate	Eileen Newington
Rural Church Advocate	Julie Kirby
Lay Preaching Advocate	Maggie Kirkbride
PLATO	Property Officer
URC Youth Representative	<i>vacant</i>
Synod Mission Enabler	<i>vacant</i>
URC Spirituality representative	<i>vacant</i>
Pilots Officer	Children and Youth Development Officer
Stepwise Co-ordinator	Training and Development Officer

Appointments made by General Assembly

Resource Sharing Task Group	Chris Atherton (secretary)
Net Zero Task Group	Judy Harris (for URC Children) Eileen Newington (for Synod Green Apostles)
Panel for General Assembly Appointments	Megan Price (retiring 2028)
Ministries Committee Leadership in worship advocate	Maggie Kirkbride
Equalities Committee	David Salisbury (secretary)

URC (Wales) Trust Company Limited

Convener	Ian Lloyd Parry	
Company Secretary	Chris Atherton	
Assistant Secretary	Property Officer	
Trustees:	<u>Trust Appointed:</u>	
	Colin Grimes	annual appointment
	Ian Lloyd-Parry	annual appointment
	<u>Synod Appointed:</u>	
	Donna Jones	2025 – 2027
	Diane Moverley	2021 – 2027
	Sandra Wallace	2017 – 2026
	Simon Walkling	2025 – 2027
	<i>1 vacancy</i>	

Synod Panel for Interviewing Ministerial Candidates

Co-ordinator:	Training and Development Officer
Members:	Julie Kirby
	Judith Negus
	Kathryn Price
	Branwen Rees
	Christine Roberts
	Jill Shelton
	Margot Seabourne

Ecumenical Appointments Made by Synod

Christian Aid	Ceri George	2019 – 2027
Commission of Covenanting Churches	Synod Moderator Officer for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Pat Davies	2018 – 2025
Commission of Covenanting Churches – Faith and Order Group	Officer for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Susan Durber	
Cytûn Trustee	Officer for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations	
Cytûn Racial Justice Network	Megan Price	
Cytûn Laser Group	Chris Atherton	
URC/PCW Liaison Group	Synod Moderator Officer for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Lynda Bull Mike Dugdale Wendy Tansill Mathias Tchatchoua	2020 – 2025 2017 – 2025 2021 – 2025 2020 – 2025
URC/Methodist Liaison Group	Synod Moderator Officer for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Noel Davies Colin Harrison Stella Hayton	2021 – 2025 2016 – 2025 2021 – 2025
Church in Wales Governing Body	Officer for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations	
Covenanted Baptists	Officer for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations	

Appendix B: Ecumenical Officer's Briefing Paper

Briefing Paper from Revd Martin Spain Synod Officer for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations

1. Introduction

The Synod adopted the Ecumenical and Interfaith Strategy some 18 months ago and the OEIR has been actively engaging with the strategy. The Synod has always worked well with its denominational and interfaith partners, but in recent times, we have made significant strides in further developing ecumenical and interfaith relations. This paper gives a brief overview of some of the ecumenical and interfaith initiatives that have and continue to take place across the Synod.

2. Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEP)

LEPs exist with the Church in Wales, the Methodists, the Baptists, the Presbyterian Church of Wales, and the Union of Welsh Independents. Each LEP is unique and tailored to its specific context. Although each LEP will have its own constitution and agreements that outline how the LEP functions, support and oversight is provided by the synod through its various committees, councils, officers and through the ecumenical officer. In addition, we have some LEPs that operate under a Sponsorship Arrangement and in the Bridgend United Area, we have an area of ecumenical co-operation, which is a defined united area with the Methodist church.

Some recent positive ecumenical work that has taken place include:

- St Davids United Church, Treforest – which moved from its former building in Pontypridd to Treforest
- Mid Wales Region – where the OEIR is now a participating member of the Mid Wales and Border Presbytery ministries committee
- Regional Ecumenical Officer Post – work is still in progress to develop this further
- Sharing of Ministry Agreement for the Alun Vale Pastorate
- Peniel with St Gwrthwl's – this is the first LEP to be formed for a number of years and was initiated by the local churches. Advice and assistance was provided by the Synod (ecumenical, finance and property, synod pastoral committee as eg) and the LEP developed a Covenant, a new Constitution and a formal Sharing Agreement. Revd Gethin Rhys, who was the preacher at the Covenant service has written an article on the LEP, celebrating the good news. It is included at the end of this report.

Some of the sadder moments have been the closure of a LEP in Welshpool, as already reported to Synod and the decision by the Church at Libanus to close the church and

join with a sister denomination. Synod, through the ecumenical officer but supported by all officers and councils, has a role to play in supporting churches to close with dignity.

The overall positive message we get from this is that it is possible to work ecumenically and to develop partnerships that work in different ways in various communities. Please speak with any Synod Officer for advice, particularly the Ecumenical Officer.

3. Ecumenical Groups

The Synod is deeply committed to ecumenical cooperation, working closely with denominations at local, national, and international levels. As the Ecumenical Officer is a General Assembly as well as Synod appointment, he is a member of a number of cross border groups as well as those in Wales. The ecumenical officer interacts with:

- CYTUN
- Free Church Council of Wales
- The Commission of Covenanted Churches in Wales
- Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI), in particular the Churches Forum for Inter Religious Relations
- The Free Churches Group: as this group represents free churches in England and Wales.
- Churches Together in England (CTE)

Some matters that should be of interest to the Synod include:-

- the Jubilee (50th) year of the formation of the Commission of Covenant Churches. A celebratory service is to be held in Cardiff on 7th June.
- Discussions are taking place among the churches of the Commission about supplemental ordination/induction. More about this will be offered at the Synod meeting.
- CTBI is commemorating the 1,700 anniversary of the meeting of the council of Nicaea, and resources are available on the theme of Christian Unity so we can explore the “enduring relevance of the first ecumenical council of the Church which took place in Nicaea 1700 years ago” [sic]
<https://ctbi.org.uk/resources/lent-2025-reflections-christian-unity-in-a-fragmenting-world/>
- Cytun is working in partnership with the Welsh Centre for International Affairs on commemorative events to mark the 1925 Welsh Churches Peace Appeal to America – Centenary Project.

4. Interfaith

The main aim of the inter-faith strategy for the United Reformed Church in Wales is to build positive relationships with people from all the faith groups in Wales. This is an important part of the mission of the United Reformed Church.

As a Synod, we are actively involved in interfaith work. The URC emphasizes inclusivity and community engagement, often collaborating with other faith groups to promote peace and understanding.

5. Interfaith Council of Wales

Interfaith initiatives in Wales are vibrant and diverse, fostering dialogue and cooperation among various faith communities. The Interfaith Council for Wales plays a significant role in promoting mutual understanding and good relations between different faiths. They organize events, facilitate discussions, and work closely with the Welsh Government to address social, economic, and cultural issues affecting faith communities. The Synod is a member of the Interfaith Council and various events are organized throughout the year to bring together people from different faiths. These events include discussions, cultural exchanges, and community service projects. Although many activities take place in the South East corner of Wales, the invitation to participate is open to all.

Churches are encouraged to look in their own community to engage with dialogue with people of different faiths. A recent example is the Revd Kate Wolsey in Pembrokeshire, who has started a conversation with the local Imam in Milford Haven, to start thinking about what both faiths might be able to do together in the community. The Imam visited Christchurch, Milford Haven recently, and spoke to the congregation about the work that is going on in the Mosque.

6. Interfaith Enabling Group

The inter faith enabling group works in close co-operation with ecumenical colleagues across Great Britain. The group helps to support the secretary for ecumenical and interfaith relations and the Synod Ecumenical and Interfaith Officer is a member of this group. Inter faith understanding is vital to the life of our churches. We all need the confidence to share our stories within a multi-faith society.

Churches may wish to note there is an Interfaith Fund, the purpose of which is the promotion of contact, understanding and respect among Christians, Jews and members of other faith communities, in ways consonant with the beliefs and practices of the United Reformed Church.

If you have a local initiative for interfaith activity, the fund may be able to help you. Speak to the Ecumenical and Interfaith Officer to see what can be sorted.

7. Conclusion

This briefing paper is to show that Wales has a vibrant landscape of ecumenical and interfaith activities aimed at fostering unity, cooperation, and mutual understanding among churches, denominations, and other faith communities. The Ecumenical and

Interfaith Strategy is one of the main tools that help churches and the Synod to fully engage with its ecumenical and interfaith responsibilities.

As with all things URC, the initiative starts with the local church and church meeting, but you are not alone, as the Synod offers the support and advice you need to make things happen. Together, we can be part of the commitment of all Wales' religious communities to foster a sense of shared citizenship, promoting peace and justice, and addressing social issues through collaborative efforts.

URC chapel hosts new Ecumenical Partnership

The little village of Llanwrthwl in Powys, mid Wales, was on 1st February 2025 the setting for an important ecumenical step forward. St Gwrthwl's Church in Wales and Penuel United Reformed Church joined together to unite as one congregation, worshipping in the Penuel building. This is the first new Local Ecumenical Partnership to be established for some years under the Church in Wales's LEP Canon, which allows clergy and lay leaders of both denominations to minister together fully to the community. Sunday services in the chapel in future will reflect both worshipping traditions.

In a moving evocation of the foundation of the original congregational chapel in 1832, all the local members present from both churches signed a new local covenant. The covenant prayerfully sets out how the churches will work together, respecting tradition but being unafraid to respond to the call God places on the fellowship. It was written after much consultation between the local churches and leaders of denominations.

The words used in the presentation of the Covenant were based on the Covenant for Unity in Wales, which celebrates its 50th anniversary this year. The promises made in this covenant between the Church in Wales, the Presbyterian Church of Wales, the Methodist Church, the United Reformed Church and a number of Baptist congregations in Wales enabled the Local Ecumenical Partnerships Canon to be passed by the Governing Body of the Church in Wales in 2005. The Covenant partners hope that this venture in Llanwrthwl will inspire other communities, urban and rural, to take similar steps towards the visible unity of God's people.

The service was led by local clergy Revd Chris Coe and Revd Robert Simpson; the Archdeacon of Brecon, the Venerable Alan Jevons, the Moderator of the URC in Wales, Revd David Salsbury and the URC's Ecumenical Officer for Wales, Revd Martin Spain. The preacher was Revd Gethin Rhys of Cytûn (Churches together in Wales), who delivered an inspiring sermon, urging the church to get up and live in its community.

The Archdeacon said, "In times when there is a continual diet of division and conflict it was really great to see Christian folk embrace each other and work towards unity and harmony." Martin Spain said, "The initiative to form a partnership came from the local churches. They had been working together for some time and decided that a more formal arrangement would be good. The local decisions led to formulating a Covenant, which set out the basis of being one congregation. The Covenant enabled the setting out of a sharing agreement and a new constitution. It can be done!". Chris Coe added, "History was made today."

Capel gwledig yn croesawu Partneriaeth Eciwmenaidd newydd

Ym mhentref bach Llanwrthwl ym Mhowys, canolbarth Cymru, ar 1 Chwefror 2025, cymerwyd cam eciwmenaidd pwysig ymlaen. Ymunodd Eglwys yng Nghymru Sant Gwrthwl ac Eglwys Ddiwygiedig Unedig Penuel fel un gynulleidfa, a fydd yn addoli yn adeilad Penuel. Dyma'r Bartneriaeth Eciwmenaidd Leol newydd gyntaf i'w sefydlu ers rhai blynyddoedd o dan Ganon Partneriaethau Eciwmenaidd Lleol yr Eglwys yng Nghymru, sy'n caniatáu i glerigion ac arweinyddion lleog y ddau enwad weinidogaethu'n llawn i'r gymuned. Bydd gwasanaethau'r y Sul yn y capel yn y dyfodol yn adlewyrchu'r ddau draddodiad.

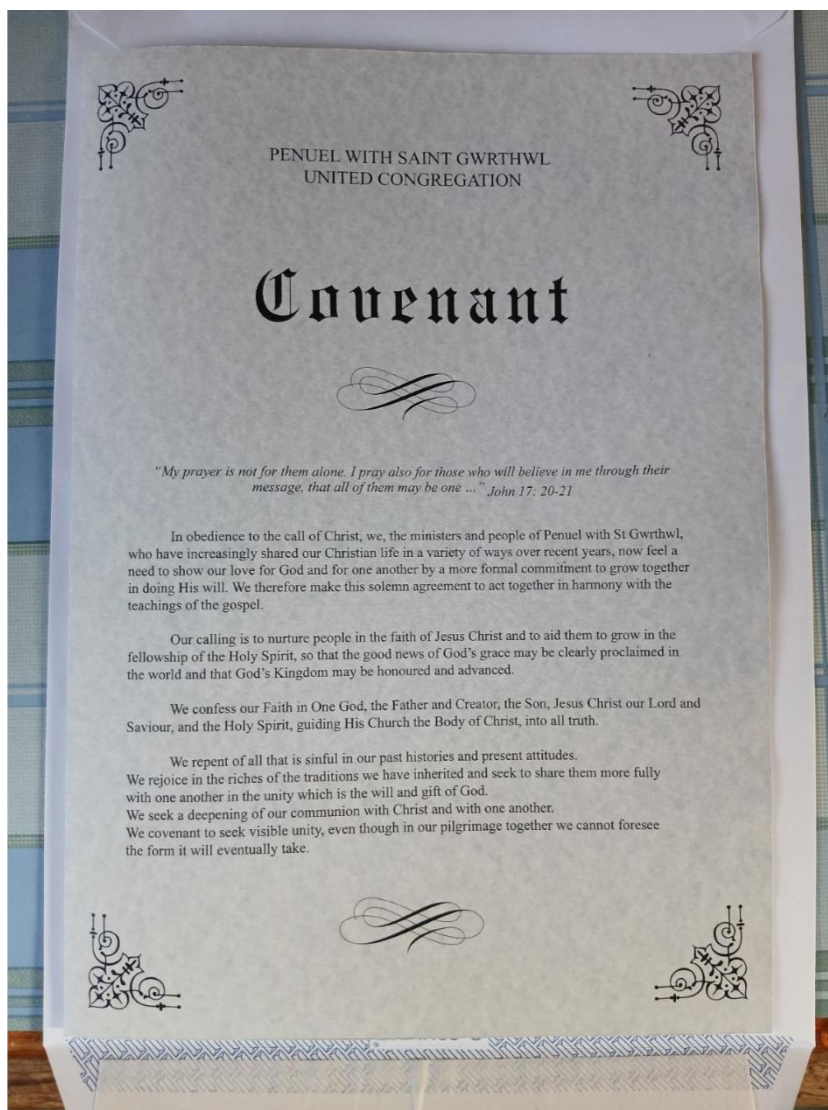
Mewn atgof teimladwy o sefydlu'r capel cynulleidfaol gwreiddiol yn 1832, arwyddodd holl aelodau lleol y ddwy eglwys gyfamod lleol newydd. Mae'r cyfamod yn nodi sut y bydd yr eglwysi'n cydweithio, gan barchu'r ddau draddodiad ond yn barod i ymateb i alwad Duw ar y gynulleidfa. Fe'i hysgrifennwyd ar ôl llawer o ymgynghori rhwng yr eglwysi lleol ac arweinyddion enwadol.

Roedd y geiriau a ddefnyddiwyd wrth gyflwyno'r Cyfamod lleol yn seiliedig ar y Cyfamod ar gyfer Undod yng Nghymru, sy'n dathlu ei hanner canmlwyddiant eleni. Galluogodd yr addewidion a wnaed yn y cyfamod hwn rhwng yr Eglwys yng Nghymru, Eglwys Bresbyteraidd Cymru, yr Eglwys Fethodistaidd, yr Eglwys Ddiwygiedig Unedig a nifer o gynulleidfaoedd y Bedyddwyr yng Nghymru i'r Canon Partneriaethau Eciwmenaidd Lleol gael ei basio gan Gorff Llywodraethol yr Eglwys yng Nghymru yn 2005. Gobaith partneriaid y Cyfamod yw y bydd y fenter hon yn Llanwrthwl yn ysbrydoli cymunedau eraill, trefol a gwledig, i gymryd camau gweladwy tuag at undod pobl Dduw.

Arweiniwyd y gwasanaeth gan y clerigwyr lleol y Parchg Chris Coe a'r Parchg Robert Simpson; Archddiacon Aberhonddu, yr Hybarch Alan Jevons; Llywydd yr URC yng Nghymru, y Parchg David Salisbury a Swyddog Eciwmenaidd Cymru yr URC, y Parchg Martin Spain. Y pregethwr oedd y Parchg Gethin Rhys o Cytûn (Eglwysi Ynghyd yng Nghymru), a draddododd bregeth ysbrydoledig yn annog yr eglwys i godi a byw yn ei chymuned.

Meddai'r Archddiacon, "Ar adegau pan glywn gymaint am ymrannu a gwrthdaro, roedd yn wych gweld Cristnogion yn cofleidio ei gilydd ac yn gweithio tuag at undod a

harmoni." Dywedodd Martin Spain, "Daeth y sbardun i ffurfio partneriaeth gan yr eglwysi lleol. Roeddent wedi bod yn cydweithio ers peth amser a phenderfynwyd y byddai trefniant mwy ffurfiol yn dda. Arweiniodd y penderfyniadau lleol at ffurfio Cyfamod, a oedd yn gosod y sail i fod yn un gynulleidfa. Roedd y Cyfamod yn galluogi trefnu cytundeb rhannu'r adeilad a chyfansoddiad newydd. Mae modd gwneud!". Ychwanegodd Chris Coe, "Roedd heddiw yn ddiwrnod hanesyddol."



Appendix C: Commission of Covenanted Churches discussion paper

The Reception of the Churches

1. The key commitment of the Covenant was the creation, under God, of a Uniting Church of Wales, in which the five traditions who committed to the Covenant would participate. As we approach the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the Covenant in 1975, that goal remains beyond our grasp. The endeavour has become impeded by the failure to resolve two main issues:
 - The necessity for the Church in Wales to abide, in any form of Uniting Church, with the personal episcopate, characteristic of its governance (often summarised as “the historic episcopate”), in order to be faithful to its polity as part of the Anglican Communion, and in ecumenical dialogue with the Catholic and Orthodox Churches.
 - The rejection of any form of reconciliation of ministry in the creation of a Uniting Church which would imply the non-validity of the existing ordinations of ministers in the churches party to the creation of the Uniting Church.
2. These two issues are lined because of the relationship of the episcopate to ordination. It is a foundational principle of Anglicanism that “No man (*or, today, including women*) shall be accounted or taken to be a lawful Bishop, Priest, or Deacon in the Church of England (*or today, the Church in Wales*), or suffered to execute any of the said functions, except he (*or she*) be called, tried, examined, and admitted thereunto, according to the Form hereafter following (*or subsequent authorised liturgies*), or hath had formerly Episcopal Consecration or Ordination.” (*Preface to the 1662 Ordinal*)
3. Can a way forward be found that addresses all these concerns adequately?
4. The first thing we have to recognise is that the creation of a Uniting Church in Wales is an **unprecedented action**. There are Churches across the globe who have become “united or uniting”, even across the episcopal/non-episcopal divide¹, and there may be profitable lessons to be learned from them, but the point is that, in the context of Wales, we are, under God, doing something which has not been done among us before. Everything would be done within this context – that God is doing something new among us, a new beginning and reality for us all.

¹ Notably the United Churches of South India (Anglican, Congregationalist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Reformed), North India (Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian), Bangladesh (Anglican, Presbyterian) and Pakistan (Anglican, Lutheran, Methodist, Reformed). There are also full Communion Agreements in place between Anglican and Methodists in Canada, Ireland, and the United States.

5. Probably the best manner in which to understand this action is that it would represent an act of mutual reception, by which each Church or tradition signatory to the Covenant would recognise that each Church is to be received into full communion by one another, by an act of reception, in which we all recognised that everything necessary for union exists, either by present life, or by future commitment.
6. For Anglicans, this would have to include the adoption of a personal mode of episcopacy, linked by ordination into the historic episcopate. I recognise that this is a big ask, but it would not be simply a wholesale importation of Anglican polity. In the first place, Anglicans recognise that the episcopate should be “locally adapted” (The Lambeth Chicago Quadrilateral), so it must be something fresh and appropriate for the new situation of a Uniting Church in Wales.
7. Furthermore, BEM taught us over forty years ago that episcopé is exercised in the Church in personal, collegial and communal modes. What Anglicans contribute by way of the personal will be blended with what the free churches can bring by way of insight into and the practice of the communal and collegial. Absolutely rejected is the model of “monarchical bishops”, which caused so much resentment of episcopacy in previous centuries. It is here that the lived reality of the United Churches of South India and of full communion elsewhere could be so helpful. Episcopacy could be received, not by the “gracious” ministrations of Anglican bishops, but by bishops genuinely rooted in the other traditions of the Covenant from across the globe.
8. The current work being undertaken by the Faith & Order Group of the Covenanted Churches on “*Translocal Ministry*” offers new insights into the ministry of episcopé in the New Testament, which allows a re-evaluation of the biblical roots of the exercise of episcopé and episcopacy.
9. Of course, this would embrace a healing of division in a manner which meets the scruples of the most fastidious of Anglican commentators, but it is not done in a manner which panders to that perspective, it is the adoption of something unprecedented for a new expression of Church.
10. This brings me to the second characteristic. The reception of the five traditions of Church by one another must be seen as **the coming together of equals**, and respecting the authenticity of their traditions. The history of each must be respected, and the fruitfulness and authenticity of the ministries of each Church affirmed in any liturgy or Act of Reception. Fortunately, the text of the Covenant helps us here, because we already recognise that “the ordained ministries of all our churches as true ministries of the word and sacraments, through which God’s

love is proclaimed, his grace mediated, and his Fatherly care exercised.” (*The 1975 Covenant Text*)

11. In the context of God doing something new among us by bringing the Uniting Church into being, we have to acknowledge that our ordination, our commission for ministry, is being extended and received into a new and larger reality. For this reason, it is appropriate to talk about “**supplemental ordination**” – all ministers of Word and Sacrament in each of the five traditions would receive the laying hands with prayer and the invocation of the Spirit for God to provide his needful gifts of grace to be received into this larger ministry. Any liturgy should explicitly affirm the authenticity of the ministries that each Church brings into this new reality, and the validity of the ordained ministry of each minister, but also acknowledge that a fresh anointing is appropriate, and for God to provide a new outpouring of grace to meet the new circumstances.
12. I would myself volunteer to be at the front of any queue, for I would be the first to recognise that I am being changed under God by a supplemental ordination for the new reality of the reception of each Church by the others.
13. The details of any act or acts for the receiving of one another into a Uniting Church would need careful working out and wording. There would have to be a strong affirmation of the nature of the united ministry into which we are moving, as well as a strong affirmation that this is not re-ordination but supplemental ordination. It is not easy, because it would take real “metanoia” on the part of all participating, and a setting aside of old battle lines and conflicted language. It would involve compromise, and humility – but the prize of mutual reception by the Churches, and a united witness to the Gospel in Wales would be a significant prize.

Questions

14. What would be the nature of episcopate in the Uniting Church?

It would be personal, collegial and communal according to a pattern to be worked out, and in continuity with apostolic succession. This could be in a lesser mode, in that each tradition would exercise episcopacy in its own life autonomously, or greater, with a scheme of structural unity – or it could be an ongoing process to which the Churches are committed as they move toward full organic communion.

15. Is “supplemental ordination” a fudge?

We would have to acknowledge a conscious agnosticism about the significance for each minister about what God is doing in any service of mutual reception alongside conscious affirmations. Anglicans would have to ask themselves: “Can we be satisfied that the ministry of the Uniting Church is a continuation of the

polity of an historic episcopate?"; our free Church companions would have to be satisfied that the act of reception is also an affirmation of the continuity of the authenticity of their ordained ministries of Word and Sacrament. However, any Act of Reception would be a major act of commitment to the future, and the nature of ministry in the Uniting Church would be agreed and clear.

16. Anglicans already live with such an agnosticism with respect to Eucharistic doctrine. Catholic Anglicans believe in the real presence, and the received documents of Anglican Roman Catholic dialogue affirm that teaching. Evangelicals may wish to affirm a more symbolic understanding of the sacramental presence of Christ. What is important is that the authorised liturgies and canon law of the Church do not rule out either of those interpretations. All may worship according to their conscience, and both the liturgy and practice of the Anglican Communion is patient of both understandings.

17. Queen Elizabeth I is reputed to have said of Eucharistic teaching:

His was the Word that spake it,
He took the Bread and brake it,
And what His Word doth make it,
That I believe and take it.

Beyond that, she seems to have believed that further disputation was harmful to the Church.

18. The Reception by the covenanted Churches in Wales of one another into a new reality would represent a new chapter of our life in Christ, and of our witness in Wales. The Act(s) of Mutual Reception or Reunion would have to be clear about the future polity of the Church, an affirmation of the authenticity of the life and ministries we bring as equal partners to the Uniting Church, and a supplemental ordination for ministers of Word and Sacrament into that new reality. We can surely leave it to God to provide what is necessary to bring that reality into being.

+GLI (Bp Gregory Cameron, Bishop of St Asaph and Church in Wales rep to the Commission of Covenanting Churches)

October 2024

Appendix D: Standing Orders for Hybrid Meetings

Standing Orders for Meetings of General Assembly of the United Reformed Church

1. The agenda of the Assembly

1.1 At its meetings the Assembly shall consider reports and draft motions prepared by its committees which include the Assembly Executive or by Synods, and motions and amendments of which due notice has been given submitted by individual members of the Assembly.

2. In-person, virtual, and hybrid meetings

2.1 A meeting may be in-person, virtual, or hybrid. The boundaries between these descriptions are not always clear. A generally in-person meeting may have a minority of members joining the meeting by virtual means. A virtual meeting may have some participants gathered together in one place. In any event, what is always strictly essential is that all participants, both in-person and virtual, can fully see and hear each other in all directions, and that the Moderator is totally confident that participants are able to see and hear each other effectively. The Moderator must also be content and comfortable that they can manage full and proper participation from all participants in the meeting.

3. Records of meetings

3.1 Any streaming and/or recording of meetings, including subtitles or captions, does not replace the formal minutes of the meeting and is not a record of the decisions made. Formal minutes shall continue to be maintained and retained.

3.2 Meetings should not normally be recorded, in order to comply fully with both safeguarding and data privacy policies.

4. Operating procedure

4.1 Meetings will commence when the Moderator opens the meeting, within the requirements set out in the Rules of Procedure.

4.2 At the start of any meeting the Moderator shall make reasonable efforts to confirm that any members attending virtually can see and hear, and be seen and heard. The meeting shall not start until the Moderator is so satisfied.

4.3 Where available, participants joining a meeting virtually should normally use video as well as audio. Where video is not available, or it is not safe for the attendee to use video, then audio only may be used.

4.4 The Meeting will finish when the Moderator formally closes the meeting.

4.5 All microphones should be set to mute at the start of the meeting, apart from the Moderator and any necessary technical staff. Microphones should only be unmuted when a participant is speaking.

4.6 The Moderator has absolute discretion to pause or adjourn the meeting at any time, and to remove any attendees from the meeting if their conduct falls short of the standards expected in church.

4.7 In all but the smallest meetings, it is helpful if the Moderator is not also the online host. The host may be a staff member(s) or volunteer(s) who are not a member of the meeting in the same way that such people may assist with stewarding meetings.

4.8 In any event, no technical failure shall invalidate any decisions made.

5. Attendance

5.1 All meetings are required to meet any previously agreed quorum, where such a quorum has been specified.

6. Interpretation of Standing Orders

6.1 Where the Moderator is required to interpret any Standing Orders they shall take advice from the Clerk before making a ruling. The Moderator's decision in all cases shall be final.

7. Presentation of business

7.1 All reports of committees, together with the draft motions arising therefrom, shall be delivered to the General Secretary by a date to be determined, so that they may be circulated to members in time for consideration before the date of the Assembly meeting.

7.2 A Synod may deliver to the General Secretary not less than twelve weeks before the commencement of the meeting of the Assembly notice in writing of a motion for consideration at the Assembly. This notice shall include the names of those appointed to propose and second the motion at the Assembly.

7.3 A local church wishing to put forward a motion for consideration by the General Assembly shall submit the motion to its Synod for consideration and, if the Synod so decides, transmission to the Assembly, at such time as will enable the Synod to comply with Standing Order 7.2 above.

7.4 A member of the Assembly may deliver to the General Secretary not less than 21 days before the date of the meeting of the Assembly a notice in writing of a motion (which notice must include the name of a seconder) to be included in the Assembly agenda. If the subject matter of such a notice of motion appears to the General Secretary to be an infringement of the rights of a Synod through which the matter could properly have been raised, the General Secretary shall inform the member accordingly and bring the matter before the Business Committee which shall advise the Assembly as to the procedure to be followed.

7.5 Proposals for amendments to the Basis and Structure of the URC, which may be made by the Assembly Executive or a committee of the General Assembly or a Synod, shall be in the hands of the General Secretary not later than 12 weeks before the opening of the Assembly. The General Secretary, in addition to the normal advice to members of the Assembly, shall, as quickly as possible, inform all Synod Clerks of the proposed amendment.

7.6 It shall not be in order at any time to move a motion or amendment which:

7.6.1 contravenes any part of the Basis of Union, or

7.6.2 involves the Church in expenditure without prior consideration by the appropriate committee, or

7.6.3 pre-empts discussion of a matter to be considered later in the agenda, or

7.6.4 amends or reverses a decision reached by the Assembly at its preceding two meetings unless the Moderator, Clerk and General Secretary together decide that changed circumstances or new evidence justify earlier reconsideration of the matter, or

7.6.5 is not related to the report of a committee and has not been the subject of 21 days' notice under Standing Order 7.4, or

7.6.6 simply reaffirms existing work.

The decision of the Moderator (in the case of 7.6.1, 7.6.2, 7.6.3, 7.6.5, and 7.6.6) and of the Moderator with the Clerk and the General Secretary (in the case of 7.6.4) on the application of this Standing Order shall be final.

7.7 In advance of the meeting, the General Secretary shall, in consultation with the Moderator and Clerk, prepare a proposal for a Facilitation Group for that meeting, for appointment at the beginning of the meeting. Some or all of the members of the Facilitation Group may be called upon by the Moderator at any time to help the Assembly reach a mind upon a question. The Assembly may add or remove members of the Facilitation Group at any time. The Facilitation Group may consult with whoever they deem it appropriate. Draft revised wording of motions should be checked by the Clerk, and by the Legal Advisor where appropriate, before being proposed to the Assembly.

8. En bloc business

8.1 The Moderator, Clerk, and General Secretary shall together decide which items of business shall be taken en bloc. Placing business in the en bloc category does not imply anything about the importance of any item of business, merely that those planning the meeting think that it may be possible to agree the business without discussion. Any members wishing to have items removed from en bloc business should notify the Clerk by a stated time in advance of the meeting. If six or more members have so notified, then the business shall be added to the agenda of the meeting, otherwise en bloc business shall be voted upon without any discussion.

9. Business requiring discussion

9.1 It is not possible to use full Consensus Decision-Making during many meetings, since Consensus Decision-Making relies upon the Moderator being able to sense the mood of the meeting, and the members also being able to sense that and trust the Moderator, which requires senses not always available in online meetings or meetings with online participants. However, all meetings should still be conducted in the spirit and ethos of seeking consensus.

9.2 To ensure that all meetings always operate to the same procedure, noting the blurred boundaries referred to in Standing Order 2, all meetings will use the information session and the discussion session from Consensus Decision-Making, and then take a vote for the actual decision-making.

9.3 All decisions shall be made by vote, using the procedure set out in Standing Order 10. The Moderator, Clerk, and General Secretary shall together decide in advance which items of business require a simple majority, and which require a two thirds majority, using the principle

that routine formal decisions such as agreeing the minutes of the previous meeting might reasonably be taken on a simple majority, whereas matters of policy require a greater level of support than a simple majority. This Standing Order does not override any other provision for a specific majority set out elsewhere in the Standing Orders, particularly procedural motions.

10. Information and discussion sessions

10.1 The first stage is the information session. During the information session, members of Assembly may ask questions only to seek clarification or further information.

10.2 Once the Moderator decides that the information session has ended, the Assembly moves into the discussion session, in which the substance of the matter may be discussed.

10.2.1 The methods used may include prayer, buzz groups, group discussions, speeches to the whole Assembly, time for thinking during a break, etc. The Moderator may invite Assembly to indicate opinions by the use of coloured cards at this stage or electronic equivalent, and shall ensure that the full ranges of voices are given opportunity to contribute.

10.2.2 Minor changes of wording may be agreed as the discussion proceeds. If a proposed change is, in the opinion of the Moderator upon the advice of the Clerk, a major change, then a proposer and seconder are required and it is an amendment.

10.3 When the Moderator senses that the Assembly may be ready to reach a decision, the Moderator shall state that Assembly is moving into the decision session.

11. Decision session

11.1 All decisions shall preferably be made by vote. Those participating virtually should normally use any built in voting mechanism in the software. In a very small meeting, where the Moderator can see everyone at once, it may be possible to resolve this informally.

11.2 Voting on any motion whose effect is to alter, add to, modify or supersede the Basis, the Structure and any other form or expression of the polity and doctrinal formulations of the United Reformed Church, is governed by paragraph 3(1) and (2) of the Structure.

12. Business and procedural motions

12.1 If notice has been given of two or more motions on the same subject, or two or more amendments to the same motion, these shall be taken in the order decided by the Moderator on the advice of the Clerk.

12.2 A report presented to the Assembly by a committee or Synod, under Standing Order 7.1, shall be received for debate, unless notice has been duly given under Standing Order 7.4 of a motion to refer back to that committee or Synod the whole or part of the report and its attached motion(s). Such a motion for reference back shall be debated and voted upon before the relevant report is itself debated. To carry such a motion two-thirds of the votes cast must be given in its favour. When a report has been received for debate, and before any motions consequent upon it are proposed, any member may speak to a matter arising from the report which is not the subject of a motion.

12.3 During the meeting of the Assembly and on the report of a committee, notice (including the names of proposer and seconder) shall be given to the Clerk of any new motions which arise

from the material of the report, and of any amendments which affect the substance of motions already presented. During the course of the debate a new motion or amendment may be stated orally without supporting speech in order to ascertain whether a member is willing to second it.

- 12.4 No motion or amendment shall be spoken to by its proposer, debated, or put to the Assembly unless it is known that there is a seconder. The only exceptions to this are motions presented on behalf of a committee, of which printed notice has been given, and the procedural motions in Standing Orders 12.12, 12.13, and 12.14. The procedural motions in Standing Orders 12.12, 12.13, and 12.14 may be moved and spoken to without the proposer having first obtained and announced the consent of a seconder. They must, however, be seconded before being put to the vote, and precedence as between the procedural motions is determined by the fact that after one of them is before the Assembly no other motion can be moved until that one has been dealt with.
- 12.5 A seconder may second without speaking and, by declaring the intention of doing so, reserve the right of speaking until a later period in the debate.
- 12.6 An amendment shall be either to omit words or to insert words or to do both, but no amendment shall be in order which has the effect of introducing an irrelevant proposal or of negating the motion. The Moderator may rule that a proposed amendment should be treated as an alternative motion or as a further motion.
- 12.7 If an amendment is carried, the motion as amended shall take the place of the original motion and shall become the substantive motion upon which any further amendment may be moved. If an amendment is rejected, a further amendment with a different outcome may be moved.
- 12.8 An amendment which has been moved and seconded shall be disposed of before any further amendment may be moved, but notice may be given of intention to move a further amendment should the one before the Assembly be rejected.
- 12.9 The mover may, with the concurrence of the seconder and the consent of the Assembly, alter the motion or amendment proposed.
- 12.10 A motion or amendment may be withdrawn by the proposer with the concurrence of the seconder and the consent of the Assembly. Any such consent shall be signified without discussion. It shall not be in order for any member to speak upon it after the proposer has asked permission to withdraw unless such permission shall have been refused.
- 12.11 Alternative (but not directly negative) motions may be moved and seconded in competition with a motion before the Assembly. It shall be for the Moderator, on the advice of the Clerk, to rule when motions shall be considered as alternatives under the Terms of this Standing Order.
- 12.11.1 When such draft alternative motions have been received by the General Secretary, the Moderators may ask the General Secretary to convene a meeting (in-person or virtual) of the proposers, to ascertain if it may be possible to agree on a single draft motion to put before the Assembly, or to clarify the areas of disagreement.
- 12.11.2 If the Assembly has alternative motions before it, each proposer shall be given the opportunity to present their motion in an order decided by the Moderator.
- 12.11.3 After any amendments duly moved under Standing Order 12 have been dealt with and debate on the alternative motions has ended, the movers shall reply to the debate in reverse

order to that in which they spoke initially. The first vote shall be a vote in favour of each of the motions, put in the order in which they were proposed, the result not being announced for one until it is announced for all. If any of them obtains a majority of those voting, it becomes the sole motion before the Assembly. If none of them does so, the motion having the fewest votes is discarded. Should the lowest two be equal, the Moderator gives a casting vote. The voting process is repeated until one motion achieves a majority of those voting.

12.11.4 Once a sole motion remains, further discussion is permissible and votes for and against that motion shall be taken in the normal way.

12.12 In the course of the business any member may move that the question under consideration be not put. This motion takes precedence over every motion before the Assembly. As soon as the member has given reasons for proposing it and it has been seconded and the proposer of the motion or amendment under consideration has been allowed opportunity to comment on the reasons put forward, the vote upon it shall be taken, unless it appears to the Moderator that an unfair use is being made of this rule. To carry this motion, two-thirds of the votes cast must be given in its favour. Should the motion be carried, the business shall immediately end and the Assembly shall proceed to the next business.

12.13 In the course of any discussion, any member may move that the question be now put. This is sometimes described as “the closure motion”. If the Moderator senses that there is a wish or need to close a debate, the Moderator may ask whether any member wishes so to move; the Moderator may not simply declare a debate closed. Provided that it appears to the Moderator that the motion is a fair use of this rule, the vote shall be taken upon it immediately it has been seconded. When an amendment is under discussion, this motion shall apply only to that amendment. To carry this motion, two-thirds of the votes cast must be given in its favour. The mover of the original motion or amendment, as the case may be, retains the right of reply before the vote is taken on the motion or amendment.

12.14 During the course of a debate on a motion any member may move that decision on this motion be deferred to the next Assembly. This rule does not apply to debates on amendments since the Assembly needs to decide the final form of a motion before it can responsibly vote on deferral. The motion then takes precedence over other business. As soon as the member has given reasons for proposing it and it has been seconded and the proposer of the motion under consideration has been allowed opportunity to comment on the reasons put forward, the vote upon it shall be taken, unless it appears to the Moderator that an unfair use is being made of this rule or that deferral would have the effect of annulling the motion. To carry this motion, two-thirds of the votes cast must be given in its favour. At the discretion of the Moderator, the General Secretary may be instructed by a further motion, duly seconded, to refer the matter for consideration by other councils and/or by one or more committees of the Assembly. The General Secretary shall provide for the deferred motion to be presented again at the next Meeting of the General Assembly.

13. Timing of speeches and of other business

13.1 Save by prior agreement of the Business Committee, speeches made in the presentation of reports concerning past work of Assembly committees which are to be open to question, comment or discussion shall not exceed five minutes.

- 13.2 The Assembly may meet in parallel sessions or breakout rooms to consider the past work of Assembly committees for questions and comments. Any draft motions arising therefrom must be dealt with in a plenary session of the Assembly.
- 13.3 Save by the prior agreement of the Business Committee, speeches made in support of the motions from any Assembly committee, including the Assembly Executive, or from any Synod, shall not exceed five minutes per resolution, and in aggregate not exceed 15 minutes (e.g. a committee with four motions may not exceed 15 minutes), unless a longer period be recommended by the Business Committee or determined by the Moderator.
- 13.4 Each subsequent speaker in any debate shall be allowed five minutes unless the Moderator shall determine otherwise; it shall, in particular, be open to the Moderator to determine that all speeches in a debate or from a particular point in a debate shall be of not more than a different specified number of minutes.
- 13.5 When a speech is made on behalf of a committee, it shall be so stated. Otherwise a speaker shall begin by giving name and accreditation to the Assembly.
- 13.6 Secretaries of committees and members of staff who are not members of Assembly may speak on the report of a committee for which they have responsibility at the request of the Convenor concerned. They may speak on other reports with the consent of the Moderator. Staff should not normally seek permission from the Moderator to speak outside their area of responsibility.
- 13.7 In each debate, no one shall address the Assembly more than once without the permission of the Moderator, except that at the close of each debate the proposer of the motion or the amendment, as the case may be, shall have the right to reply, but must strictly confine the reply to answering previous speakers and must not introduce new matters. Such reply shall close the debate on the motion or the amendment.
- 13.8 The foregoing Standing Order (13.7) shall not prevent the asking or answering of a question which arises from the matter before the Assembly or from a speech made in the debate upon it.
- 13.9 An invited speaker, whether speaking to a draft motion or not, may address the Assembly for such period of time as may be agreed by the Business Committee.

14. Questions

- 14.1 A member may, if two days' notice in writing has been given to the General Secretary, ask the Moderator or the Convenor of any committee any question on any matter relating to the business of the Assembly to which no reference is made in any report before the Assembly.
- 14.2 A member may, when given opportunity by the Moderator, ask the presenter of any report before the Assembly a question seeking additional information or explanation relating to matters contained within the report.
- 14.3 Questions asked under Standing Order 14 shall be put and answered without discussion.

15. Points of order, personal explanations, dissent

- 15.1 A member shall have the right to call attention to a point of order, and immediately on this being done any other member addressing the Assembly shall cease speaking until the

Moderator has determined the question of order. The decision on any point of order rests entirely with the Moderator. Any member calling to order unnecessarily is liable to censure of the Assembly.

- 15.2 A member feeling that some material part of a former speech by such member at the same meeting has been misunderstood or is being grossly misinterpreted by a later speaker may request the Moderator's permission to make a personal explanation. If the Moderator so permits, a member so rising shall be entitled to be heard forthwith.
- 15.3 The right to record in the minutes a dissent from any decision of the Assembly shall only be granted to a member by the Moderator if the reason stated, either verbally at the time or later in writing, appears to the Moderator to fall within the provisions of paragraph 10 of the Basis of Union.
- 15.4 The decision of the Moderator on a point of order, or on the admissibility of a personal explanation, or on the right to have a dissent recorded, shall not be open to discussion.

16. Admission of the public and closed sessions

- 16.1 Only those who are members of the meeting, staff members in attendance, or invited guests may join a meeting. However, a meeting in open session may allow guests or be shown as a live stream.
- 16.2 A closed session is one in which the business is highly sensitive. Only members of Assembly, the Legal Adviser, and any technical staff required to enable Assembly to function may be present. Neither content nor process may be divulged to non-members, save specific information authorised by the Moderator in consultation with the Clerk and the Legal Adviser. No social media in any form may be used during a closed session, nor to report upon such closed session. Any live streaming must be switched off. Minutes will be taken, but these will be held in retentis by the Clerk, and shall not be made available to non-members.
- 16.3 A closed session may be called for at any time in any decision-making mode, and voted upon by the Assembly, requiring a simple majority. This motion takes precedence over every motion before the Assembly. As soon as the member has given reasons for proposing it and it has been seconded, and the proposer of the motion or amendment under consideration has been allowed opportunity to comment on the reasons put forward, the vote upon it shall be taken, unless it appears to the Moderator that an unfair use is being made of this rule. Should the motion be carried the business shall immediately pause while non-members leave the meeting.
- 16.4 If a matter is known to be highly sensitive in advance, then the Assembly Officers, consulting the Legal Adviser if necessary, may announce in advance that a certain piece of business will be conducted in a closed session giving their reasons.
- 16.5 Members of Assembly who leave during a closed session may not be re- admitted.

17. Communications during the course of debate

- 17.1 The primary responsibility of members is to attend to the business and participate in the decision making. Those present must refrain both from posting on social media sites during business sessions and from commenting upon partially completed business. It is the responsibility of the communications committee's staff to make official announcements. This restriction is only in place when in session; those attending are free to join in the online

debates during breaks and after the close of business in respect of business that the Assembly has completed. Everything written and shared on social media sites at any time is the sole responsibility of the author, and is subject to the same defamation laws as any other form of written communication.

18. Record of the Assembly

- 18.1 A record of attendance at the meetings of the Assembly shall be kept in such a manner as the Business Committee may determine.
- 18.2 The draft minutes of each day's proceedings shall be made available in an appropriate form normally on the following day. They shall, after any necessary correction, be approved at the opening of a subsequent session. Concerning the minutes of the closing day of the Assembly the Clerk shall submit a motion approving their insertion in the full minutes of the Assembly after review and any necessary correction by the Officers of the Assembly. Before such a motion is voted upon, any member may ask to have read out the written minute on any particular item.
- 18.3 A signed copy of the minutes shall be preserved in the custody of the General Secretary as the official record of the Assembly's proceedings.
- 18.4 As soon as possible after the Assembly meeting ends, the substance of the minutes together with any other relevant papers shall be published as a "Record of Assembly" and a copy sent to every member of the Assembly, each Synod and local church.

19. Suspension and amendment of Standing Orders

- 19.1 In any case of urgency or upon proposal of a motion of which due notice has been given, any one or more of the Standing Orders may be suspended at any meeting, provided that three-fourths of the members of the Assembly present and voting shall so decide.
- 19.2 Motions to amend the Standing Orders shall be referred to the Clerk of the Assembly for report before being voted on by the Assembly (or, in case of urgency, by the Assembly Executive). The Clerk of the Assembly may from time to time suggest amendments.

Person responsible for editing document: Clerk of the General Assembly

Date of last revision: August 2022